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PROSTITUTION.¹

THE RELATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF EUROPE TO THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IN BOSTON.

BY ARTHUR K. STONE, M.D.

PROSTITUTION is a subject which forces itself upon the attention of every member of the medical profession living in a large city. It is one which every man is liable to be called to give some opinion upon in these days of reform and social evolution, and that opinion, it seems to me, should be given with some knowledge of the facts of the case. It is not my intention in the following paper to discuss the ethics of the subject, or to theorize about the necessity or non-necessity of the prostitute, but to take up the matter as it presents itself to us as a social evil, present with us, and one which should be met and dealt with according to some fixed policy.

I do not expect to settle the matter or to change men's minds if they are already made up upon a definite basis, but I hope to point out some of the considerations which must be known and understood before any really judicial opinion can be given. If I can set a number of practical medical men thinking seriously upon this problem, I shall have accomplished my aim.

One thing I would say, in passing, to the moral reformers, and that is, that their attention should be directed towards the men and not towards the women, for so long as there are men who wish for illicit sexual gratification, so long will there be women, either for

¹ Read before the Boston Society of Medical Improvement, April 1896

love, for hire, or from compulsion to supply the demand.

As to the sources of information which I have made use of in this paper, I am indebted to the great interest in the subject in Europe during the years of 1890-92. At that time a large number of government and medical commissions were appointed, and made reports after thorough investigation of the subject, and from these reports we can get a very good idea of the state of mind existing in Europe, and of the plans that were proposed and the conditions presenting themselves in various parts of Europe at the beginning of the present decade.

One of the most frequent answers made by medical men to one seeking knowledge upon the subject of prostitution is "Oh, prostitution is a necessary evil, and I believe that some control should be exercised to prevent the spread of disease, just as they do upon the continent of Europe." Let us first consider how much control is exercised in Europe. England alone of the European nations makes no pretence to government or municipal control, and not much pretence to check the openest solicitation — many of the principal streets of London being simply thronged after dark with women who seize upon any passing man and almost compel him to go with them.

All the Continental cities exercise a certain amount of control over some of their prostitutes, and for the most part keep the rest under such restraint that in no place is there such open solicitation as is to be found in Piccadilly and Regent Street in London. Yet in Paris solicitation does take place on the open streets. But nowhere is the number of women under police control anything like the total which are to be found in the ranks of the daughters of Lillith. In all European cities there are two varieties of prostitutes who are

under police control first, those who live in houses that are chartered and licensed, and, second, those who are inscribed, but carry on business at their own apartments being as it were free lances. These latter have books in which their names and histories are inscribed, that is, their police examinations, together with the length of their stay, their disease and treatment, when they were last in the hospital. In some places these women have to report at certain times to police headquarters for examination, and at others they can be simply summoned whenever wanted. In some cities there are certain cafés where they are allowed to solicit patronage and other women are not permitted the same privilege. They must, however, confine themselves to these places. Then there are in some places certain recognized houses of assignation, but these seem to play a rôle of but little importance in the general problem. The women in the licensed houses are examined at intervals of varying lengths of time, before 1892, for the most part at the police-stations and at the expense of the proprietors of the houses. Solicitations from the windows or sidewalk is not permitted by law for these houses. In Berlin, says Blaschko, the women were to be examined every eight to ten days, as a matter of fact, they were not examined oftener than once in two weeks.

The proportion of prostitutes under police control may be judged from the following statistics. The Prefect of Police in Paris admitted to Professor Dr. Lassar of Berlin, who was sent by the German Government to investigate the methods of control in the city of Paris, that there were fully one hundred thousand prostitutes in Paris, and I cannot see that this estimate includes the large number of girls working in restaurants and wine shops, but simply women who have no regular means of support except their profes-

sion There were in all Paris in January, 1888, only sixty-seven licensed houses Many of the houses of Paris, are in a great measure kept open for the edification of travellers who are taken to see the sights of the wicked city, and sexual intercourse is rather of secondary importance The far greater part of the girls that are to be found at such places as the Bullier and Moulin Rouge and many of the cafés, concert and dance halls are uninscribed; the one thing that they fear and will do most to avoid, is that they will be taken to the police-station and be enrolled and from that time be under police surveillance, and it is only when they have become so hardened and shameless that they become public nuisances that they are arrested by the police and inscribed and subjected to police examination and control.

In Belgium, with its 6,600,000 people there were, according to Dr Fraux, only 96 licensed houses with 486 inmates, while the inscribed prostitutes numbered 661 At the same time there are 585 women known to be prostitutes by the police but not inscribed by them This estimate makes no consideration for the government prostitutes supplied for the army. Thus it will be seen that the number of women under police control is very small indeed, and this number, although I did not find any absolute figures, is taken to be about the proportion that exists throughout the other cities in Europe as was borne out by the fact that it was everywhere recognized that some measures should be taken to secure greater control of the prostitutes.

The next question which we need to investigate is whether the existing control does what it promises to do, that is, give the visitor to the licensed house of prostitution or to the inscribed girl the assurance that he will be free from the danger of venereal disease

To this point I shall again quote Fiaux in regard to his investigations in Belgium. In the month of January, 1889, 287 licensed prostitutes of Brussels were examined, only to find 66 with venereal disease, 37 of them being syphilitic, while the police reports of the decade 1870-80 show a percentage of 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. diseased among the inmates of houses, and about 33 per cent among the inscribed women. Professor Bergh, of Copenhagen, is quoted as having similar experience, and the statistics for 1886-90 show that the percentage of inmates for licensed houses has been nearly twice as large as among the inscribed women. Neisser, of Breslau, with several assistants, examined 573 prostitutes, and in 216 he found gonococci present (37.6 per cent). Dr. Passavant, of Paris, is quoted as saying that out of every hundred inscribed women 35 to 50 per cent. have venereal disease. Dr. Fiaux shows that in Belgium, in 1881-1889, one-half of the inmates of the licensed houses had to be sent to the hospitals for treatment with venereal disease, of whom about 50 per cent. were syphilitic. Of inscribed women, about one-third were treated at the hospitals, about one-sixth of these being syphilitic. Lasek, in an extensive examination of prostitutes for the presence of gonococci, found in the examination of the urethra of 353 patients that the gonococci could be demonstrated 112 times, although in four-fifths of these cases there was no macroscopical evidence of gonorrhea. Several of these patients had been discharged from the hospitals as cured.

Some of the figures in other cities are as follows.

Lyons, 1880-1885: percentage of diseased inmates of licensed houses 85 per cent., inscribed 40 per cent.

Brussels, 1881-1889: inmates 50 per cent., inscribed 33 per cent.

Rotterdam inmates 35 per cent, inscribed 10 per cent.

Mireur, of Marseilles, stated that he found out of every 100 cases of venereal disease which came to his notice that 62 came from houses of prostitution.

Kaposi states that in 1888-1889 there were 1,770 inscribed women in Vienna; of these 841 were treated for venereal disease, 1,634 were arrested at various times for disorderly conduct, 477 being punished. Of uninscribed women 1,332 were arrested for disorderly conduct, of whom 170 (or 12 per cent.) were found to be diseased. There are said to be 25,000 prostitutes in Vienna.

In Hamburg, the *Allgemeine Krankenhaus* reports that 50 per cent of the venereal disease originates in houses of prostitution, 10 per cent with the inscribed women, and credits the remainder of the cases to Altona, a small city lower down the river. Nominally houses of prostitution have been abolished in Hamburg, in reality, they exist.

Blaschko says that of 2,000 private patients with venereal disease 60 per cent. originated with prostitutes, 10 per cent with shop-girls, 4 per cent with bar-maids.

The statement that the proportion of diseased women among the recognized prostitutes is somewhere between 30 and 50 per cent. is generally accepted as being the state of things throughout Europe.

In regard to the question whether or no there is an actual increase of syphilis at the present time the writers seem to differ. Summing up the evidence, there appear to be a few who believe that syphilis is on the decrease, while the majority are convinced of its increase. In Paris, Dr Vidal of the Hôpital St Louis, which is the centre of skin diseases of all Paris and France, states that the number of syphilitic

patients is daily increasing. Prof. Léon le Fort, of the Hôpital du Midi, and Professor Fournier and Dr Mauriac all expressed the same views. On the other hand, Dr. Weber, director of the Val de Grâce Military Hospital, states that the amount of venereal disease among the soldiers is decreasing. The same seems to be true among the Belgian army. Here it is probably owing to the government furnishing women for the soldiers.

In Berlin, Dr. Blaschko believes that the amount of venereal disease has been decreasing in Berlin since 1856. But Professor Wolf denies that Blaschko's statistics in this regard are correct. Also, Dr. S. Neumann takes the same ground, and denies that syphilis is in retrogression.

The general opinion in the Berlin Congress was that venereal disease was on the increase and that measures must be taken to check its advance. Blaschko in his paper stated that, from the standpoint of public hygiene, no benefit was received whatever from the control as then practised. A commission consisting of Virchow, Blaschko, Meyer, Strassman, Langerhaus, Villaret, B. Frankel, Pistor, Lewin, S. Neumann, B. and M. Wolf were appointed to consider the subject, and they reported that the sanitary conditions and measures existing in Berlin for the prevention and treatment of venereal disease were insufficient. And this was the general opinion arrived at by all the men throughout Europe who had the investigation in hand, that the protection did not protect, neither did the control check the advance of the evil.

Having arrived at this definite conclusion, the next point was what should be done. Here the opinions varied greatly. One of the French Ministers told Lassar that the conditions varied so in the different cities that no general law was possible, but that each

municipality must deal with the problem as it was presented to it. Another French Minister, Gayot, who has given this subject a great deal of study and written a book upon prostitution, has reached the conclusion that abolition is the proper thing and prostitution is a moral and personal question and that there was no reason why it should be recognized by protecting law, taking the position that has so far been held in England and America.

In the Tenth International Congress, at Berlin, the opinion was for the most part expressed in favor of segregation of all prostitutes, insisting that they should live in a special quarter and in licensed houses where they could be under strict surveillance, no solicitation to be allowed, and any one being found acting as a prostitute to be judged as one and treated accordingly, also any one treated for venereal disease to be also considered as a prostitute, all the women to have a semi-weekly examination at a medical bureau at the expense of the city, and any one found having venereal disease to be sent to the hospital. Felix, Drysdale Heinzinger, and Crocq dissented from the majority, expressing the decided opinion that the centralization of prostitutes was a source of danger to the rest of the community, and especially the intact girls, who would be exposed to greater temptations than under the existing conditions, and affirming the utter impossibility of removing all prostitutes to any special quarter of the city or punishing them by legal means, as the boundary between free love and prostitution is absolutely undefined.

Contrary to the opinion expressed in the Berlin Congress, it seems to be generally held and supported by statistics that the houses of prostitution are much greater sources of danger than the inscribed women. the statistics given tending to show that the number

of infected women in the licensed houses amounts to about 40 to 50 per cent., while the number among the inscribed women is under 30 per cent.

In very many of the large cities the number of licensed houses has steadily fallen, for example, Paris, 1850, 212; 1880, 133, January, 1888, 67. In St Petersburg, in the 14 years from 1872-1886 the number fell from 220 to 82, at the same time the inscribed free women increased from 2,500 to 4,500. In Belgium there has been a steady diminution in the numbers of houses and inmates, so that now there are only about one-third as compared with twenty years ago, all of this going to show that there is a tendency for this form of dissipation to go out of fashion. This, together with the fact that the women of the licensed houses from their more frequently indulging in copulation and their inability to choose their companions and their lack of self-responsibility, are much less careful of their bodies and hence more apt to be diseased. In Antwerp it has been seriously proposed to do away with the seven licensed houses and to have only inscribed free prostitutes.

So it will be seen that there are no absolute methods which can be said to render any successful solution to this difficult problem. But if any one will stop to consider for a moment, it will be seen that rating as a prostitute every one that is found in any way diseased or soliciting is only possible in a government of the most paternal kind, backed with inquisitorial powers.

All the writers upon the subject recognize the fact that there are not enough hospital accommodations for the treatment of the diseased prostitutes. In Vienna it was urged by Neumann that a large hospital be built for this purpose, any prostitute with syphilis to be committed for at least two years, those

with gonorrhea until recovery. It is argued that any such regulation as this would tend to extend rather than restrain the spread of syphilis, for the great fear of incarceration would cause infected women who were inscribed to conceal their trouble as long as possible, to leave a town where they were known for another where they could work unmolested, because unknown, then, too, the utter impossibility of having hospital accommodations large enough to carry out such a plan must be clearly realized. And if there were not prison hospitals there would be no way to keep the women from plying their profession as now, for they would have to live even though diseased.

We see from the above hasty and imperfect sketch that neither of the plans for the control of prostitution is perfect, for in Vienna where the inscribed free prostitute has specially flourished the general opinion seems to be that the system is inadequate and that all prostitution should be confined to licensed houses, while in Belgium the contrary opinion has gained ground, that the licensed houses are the most dangerous, and safety of the masses is best secured by the controlled free prostitute.

In the consideration of the conditions of the subject on the continent of Europe I have purposely omitted all reference to the army and its statistics. Here there has probably been a distinct gain in diminishing the number of cases of venereal disease, but the methods by which this has been reached are of no interest to us at the present time, as we do not have the problem of thousands of soldiers quartered in our great cities.

The different standard of morals must always be taken into consideration in applying deductions from European society to our own, also the different position in which women are regarded on the Continent and in New England. I will not attempt to enlarge

upon this point, but would ask the gentlemen always to bear this in mind in speaking or writing upon the subject

To come to our own city of Boston Before the change in administration in our police commission the city had a most unenviable reputation A very large number of houses of prostitution were in full force and did a most thriving business. The traffic in young women was extensive, and the agents of several societies, notably the Traveller's Aid Department of the Y W C A had to be constantly on the watch to prevent the capture of young women arriving from Europe, the provinces, and the country The houses ran night and day, and no period of rest from duty was allowed to the majority of the inmates during any part of the month At the same time, I am told by those who were investigating the subject at that time, there were houses where it was just as safe for a visitor as though the house had been licensed and been under government control. In all the houses liquor was sold illicitly, and even in those unrestrained days any one failing to call for liquor was regarded with suspicion Robberies were frequent, and the most disgraceful orgies were common Many of the so-called "parlor houses" were run largely for the purpose of robbery, by means of selling wines and liquors at extortionate prices to drunken patrons, the sexual part being of secondary consideration. Since the persistent raids which followed the advent of the present Chairman of Police Commissioners into office a large proportion of the houses have been closed and remain closed The agent of the Traveller's Aid Society, Miss Blodgett, states that there is less attempt being made to entrap the newly arrived girls, though this is probably in a large measure due to the persistent watchfulness of Miss Blodgett and others The

Rev Mr. Tobey of Berkeley Temple states that so efficient has been the action of the police in the city as a whole, there is only about one-third of the prostitutes engaged in their profession that there was eighteen months ago, and is prepared to support his assertion by statistics. On the other hand, in other quarters of the city hitherto perfectly free from the presence of such women small groups of prostitutes have appeared, and are causing their neighbors a good deal of trouble and apprehension. The greater part of the prostitution that is carried on in the city at present, outside of that promiscuous intercourse that exists among the lowest strata of society, is now carried on in a freelance way, and not from specially organized houses. This is vouched for by the agents of various societies who have the doings of many of the keepers of such houses under surveillance, and know that they have either left the city or are not engaged in running houses of prostitution, though many are waiting for the first signs of relaxed activity on the part of the police to open their houses once more. Some of the girls have gone to their homes, and many others have been found employment, and their movements are under the observation of the agents of various societies.

Is this for the better or worse? Has the dispersion of the prostitutes among a class of the people formerly free from their presence, and the possible increased danger to women from the assaults of men thus deprived of their customary sexual relief, made a condition of things that is worse than the former free system? The latter argument does not seem to me to have any weight. The dangerous classes live so that it is possible for them to indulge in sexual intercourse at all times, and they cannot from the very necessity of their existence support the houses of

prostitution and are consequently not affected by the change. If the fact that prostitutes are to be found in new quarters tends to raise a strong public sentiment among our all too easy-going people so that they are forced to recognize that this is an evil which must be met and dealt with in some way or other, not a mere abstract question which in no way concerns the average family or the average citizen, then I maintain that the evil of the dispersion is overbalanced by the good. On the other hand, the closure of the houses has removed a large amount of temptation from weak men, many of whom go to such places not for any purpose of gratification of strong sexual passion but simply "with the boys." Once there, they are filled with alcohol, robbed and given disease. Further, the supply now exceeding the demand, there is less attempt to entrap young and previously innocent women for immoral purposes, neither is there such a free and easy opening for a girl made desperate by lack of work or previous disgrace to enter upon the life of a public prostitute, and hence it is much more easy for the agents of the numerous societies to get hold of her and keep or make her a respectable member of the community. Thus, and thus only can the number of prostitutes in our midst be made very gradually to diminish. This decrease could be materially hastened by lessening the number who are born prostitutes; for by castration and ovariectomy the persistent criminals and chronic paupers should be prevented from reproducing their kind, the female portion of which are practically born prostitutes.

In conclusion, I would say that I have looked over the discussion of the Contagious Disease Acts that took place in England during the period of 1870-1875, and with very few changes the conditions were exactly the same as at the present time. There was

the same amount of discouraging statistics from Paris and other Continental cities, the same demand for more frequent examinations and the same report of the impossibility of controlling all women engaged in the profession, the same statements that the number of licensed houses was decreasing, by some marked with apprehension. In fact, one of the greatest arguments which has been put into the hands of the non-recognition party is this fact, that at the end of twenty to twenty-five years of practical application Europe had, according to her own report, by no means solved the problem of control or diminished the spread of venereal disease. New methods, perhaps better, certainly more inquisitorial, have since been instigated, the results of which we have no means of knowing and cannot have for some years to come, but from their very diversity they furnish us with no indication of any sure course that here in Boston we should follow. There seems to be no other way open to us but to wait for a decade at least, until we find out what method offers the greatest chance of success in obtaining a real control over this evil. In the mean time it seems mandatory for us to pursue our present policy of repression of the evil to its smallest possible limits. And this can only be accomplished by a vigorous public sentiment which shall support enthusiastically the strong arm of the law in its work of repression under existing laws and shall make the increase in the ranks of prostitutes as small as possible — by every means which shall check the traffic in girls, by education of both boys and girls in our homes and schools, by a law which shall raise the age of consent, and by removing from the chronic criminal classes the power of reproduction of their species. At the same time the spread of venereal disease should be combated by hospital accommodations for those who are now debarred from proper medical care and treatment.

DISCUSSION

DR DEBLOIS. I won't commence with the examinations in Boston; I will go a little further back to the government service, and will give you a few notes of things I remember at that time. In the various departments of the naval academy where 300 to 400 young men from eighteen to twenty-two, were kept within walls during eight months of the year and then taken off on a cruise and occasionally turned loose on the shore, it is not to be wondered at that they were like the bull kept ready for the bull-fight in the arena, that they rushed madly to their own destruction. I remember one foreign cruise in which most of these young men were turned loose in Paris and went to one of the proverbial houses (a show-house). These were not entirely show-houses, for I met afterwards a French nobleman who had lived in Paris a great deal, and he told me these houses were great resorts with the French themselves, they go and stay there several days. The examination of these houses was very carefully made. The women were very careful themselves. They always examined their company, and knew enough to make a gross examination. From Paris we went to Portsmouth, and though there are licensed women in England, there are no houses as we understand them in this country and in France and on the Continent. The women were loose and rambled about. There was a great deal more venereal disease in Portsmouth, England, than in Paris. In Paris we had very few cases. Afterwards in Spain and Portugal, Lisbon, Cadiz where there were government houses to which the most went. There were 250 to 300 men on the ship; and in Lisbon there are well-regulated government houses where inspection is carefully made, and the

amount of venereal disease contracted was very small indeed. I have been on ships in other parts of the world, the West Indies particularly, and some in South America, and there venereal disease was very frequent. There was neither licensing nor examination.

I was led to look a little into venereal disease in Boston from the amount that I saw because I was obliged to take syphilis to keep my throat cases, and I have had to do with it in young students in Harvard and Technology, and last year I had three cases of disease transmitted from lip to lip. Twice since I have been in Boston I have made examinations in houses—once, a long time ago, in not a very high priced house where there was much less disease than I found later. Last year I was asked to make regular examinations of one of the best houses in Boston, and I did during last year carry out the thing faithfully as far as I was able. There were no microscopic examinations made. Had there been I do not suppose a woman in the house would have been allowed to continue. I think Dr. E. W. Cushing has pretty well demonstrated the fact that the gonococcus lives forever in the tubes and ovaries of a woman of that kind when once afflicted. That house was closed during the advent of reform, and it worked so effectually that I was never able to get my instruments out of the house. In this case I made examinations three times a month, and examined from five to nine women. I insisted that the women should be examined before they dressed. At my first visit I threw out two out of seven with secondary syphilitic throats. The examination consisted of the skin, throat and nose, and the genitals with the speculum always. I found several cases of primary trouble, and I believe that those women were thrown out of employment for a short

time, I do not know how long I never knew of but one case of disease having been contracted while I made the examinations there. There was one woman who persistently refused to be examined, and I know she imparted disease to a young man across the river. The greatest difficulty in these cases is the unwillingness of the women themselves to be examined. Under all kinds of excuses they avoided it. The amount of menstruation these women had, according to their own accounts, was fabulous. They would menstruate three times a month if you would credit it. They had to be driven from the beds to the bath room and from the bath-room to the room where I made the examination. They came in before they were dressed, so that I could make as careful an examination as I knew how for evidences of syphilis on the skin. I think if I had had any other authority behind me except the word of the woman who kept the house I might have done more good than I did. I feel sure that I saved a great many young men from disease, because I know I threw out several cases of gonorrhea which would have been passed round. I do not discuss the ethics of the case any more than Dr. Stone does. This is a thing that has existed from the beginning of the world, and has got to exist. Young men are growing up, and it is in their youth they are reckless and contract disease which goes with them through life. Many of them never get over it, because they will not take proper treatment. It seems to me there should be some place where these women can be taken care of.

DR. FORSTER I saw in the paper this morning that there was a bill reported to the legislature making it mandatory on every city of 50,000 to have a hospital that would take venereal disease. A friend of mine, one of the senators, has made a special effort to have

that rule which prohibits venereal disease from hospitals abrogated. I think he is about to accomplish his purpose. My own experience in treating venereal diseases leads me to think that most of the cases are not contracted inside houses of prostitution. I am very glad to see that the people are waking up to the fact that such cases should be admitted to hospitals.

DR. FOISOM. I think a great deal can be learned from the experience of England with reference to regulating these diseases in the army. In the first place, it shows that in an inquiry of this kind it is impossible to get at the facts. In the second place, it shows, in my opinion, that no examination of prostitutes which is practicable will materially control the amount of venereal disease that prevails in the community. And, in the third place, it shows that laws licensing prostitutes or regulating prostitution cannot be maintained in any English-speaking country, and that they cannot be passed in any English-speaking country where people know what they are doing. I suppose the gentlemen all know that the laws controlling syphilis and gonorrhea in England applied only to certain garrison towns in England, Ireland and India, and in certain cases of some of the larger towns, only to that portion of the town where the soldiers were quartered. The gentlemen who were very anxious to have this bill passed knew perfectly well that no such laws could be passed unless under some name which did not betray their significance, and so they were called the Contagious Diseases Acts. They were passed, and I do not remember how many years they were in existence, but long enough to have had quite a number of parliamentary inquiries and an immense deal of literature on the subject published by the government, beside a great deal by the adherents of the law and those opposed to it. The statistics

were interpreted in diametrically opposite ways by the two parties. The facts in regard to the case were, so far as I could learn, that the amount of gonorrhea in the army was considerably reduced, about one-fourth I think, but the amount of syphilis not very much. The opponents of the laws used the same statistics in such a way as to show that this was not the result, if one considered the whole population and not the army alone, but that the laws actually made matters worse. After reading quite a number of parliamentary and other reports it is difficult to satisfy one's self how much reduction there was.

With regard to the effect on the women themselves, the facts probably were, I think, that there was very much less marked evidence of disease than in other places, but of course the evidence of gonorrhea cannot always be seen by the naked eye and women may be in a state to infect and nothing be seen by ocular examination, and it would be impossible in every case to have microscopical examination.

In regard to chancres, everybody knows that they are often very difficult or impossible to find, and moreover, women within a few days or hours after examination may manifest signs of syphilis. The opponents of the laws stated that the effect of these examinations was to drive the infected women away from the garrison towns into the population in general and they also maintained and in some cases their evidence was without contradiction, that virtuous and innocent women had been taken by police and examined who not only had not had venereal disease, but were absolutely virgins. The evidence was so contradictory and the moral offence of the laws was so great that just as soon as the community in general found out the real purport of the laws they were repealed by act of parliament.

With regard to the hospitals for syphilis and gonorrhea, the experience of England is interesting in that respect. Throughout the kingdom, some thirty-five years ago, more or less, quite a number of hospitals were established, called from Mr. Locke their originator, Locke hospitals. The general impression in many parts of England and in this country was that they were hospitals where prostitutes were detained under lock and key until cured. I find that the universal experience was that their influence in reducing the amount of venereal disease in the community was nothing. There was no law which could be passed by the English parliament which would make it possible to detain these women there beyond the length of time they were willing to stay. They came in in their helpless condition and as soon as well enough to be about went out, and just as much in a condition to infect men as before and in some cases more so. It is alleged that a few were reformed.

It is a difficult problem. I suppose the gentlemen know that St. Louis is the only place in this country where an attempt has been made to regulate these diseases by licensing and inspection, and there the city ordinance was very short-lived.

DR. C. P. PUTNAM. As many of the gentlemen may know, at the Almshouse Hospital at Tewksbury and at the Long Island Hospital a great many syphilitic patients are cared for. There is a statute allowing the keeper of almshouses to detain patients as long as the disease is in an active condition.

Of course the number is not great as compared with all needing the treatment, but a still greater number might be induced to go to these hospitals.

DR. FOLSOM. I dare say Dr. Putnam will remember that the law of which he speaks is a revival of what used to be called the Omnibus Act, passed a

number of years ago. It worked quite well in detaining a few women with venereal disease. It gave the State Board of Charities the power to retain vagrants and all sorts of disorderly persons. It did not mention prostitutes or people with venereal diseases, but prostitutes were retained under that law and women with syphilitic disease were retained until thought to be pretty well. It was necessary for somebody to appear at the State House almost every year to prevent the repeal of the law. But finally the law was repealed. But, as Dr Putnam says, it has been revived in a different form now, and a few women are kept at Tewksbury and Bridgewater, but I do not fancy the number is sufficient to make any material difference in the amount of venereal disease in the State.

DR. STONE I did not know that I stated that the houses in Boston were better than those on the other side, only no worse and it must be remembered that the Europeans furnish about sixty per cent. of the diseased inmates. The amount of disease in one of the best houses in Boston as seen by Dr DeBlois would bear out my statement.

In regard to the Contagious Acts I did not consider them for many of the reasons the gentlemen have spoken of. It was an Act entirely confined to the garrison towns, many of which were almost small villages having nothing but the houses in which the prostitutes lived and a few stores which were required to run the people who took care of the army, and so in many ways it did not seem to enter into this discussion. Some of the arguments used at the present time are about the same as used then. It was brought out at one of the hearings that the women called themselves the Queen's women as the soldiers were the Queen's men. One argument used by those opposed to the

law was the danger of the spread of the disease by the use of the dirty speculum. That argument has disappeared under the beneficent reign of aseptic surgery. An argument used by those in favor of the Contagious Acts was that it was no expense to the taxpayer, that the expense was all to be paid by women. This argument has been turned round and those in favor of the extension of more severe measures in the Continental cities are having it distinctly understood that they advocate doing away with the payment of the money by the women themselves and having it done at the expense of the government.

What I meant by waiting a decade was that these new methods backed perhaps by some of the bacteriological work that is being done might possibly have a certain amount of effect, and at the end of that time something more definite could be stated in regard to what position we could take before the country. But during the time that it is to be we have got, as has been said, to maintain public sentiment and do what we can for these unfortunates. It seems as though the time was ripe for doing away with the regulations in regard to our hospitals.

I am told by those who have charge of some of the societies that a great change has come over the people. Twenty or thirty years ago a woman who had made a misstep in a sexual way was practically damned, no house open to her and no way to reform. At the present time, they said if they could have gotten hold of the 5,000 women supposed to have been turned out of the houses in the last eighteen months they could have furnished places in families for every one of those women without any trouble, showing the change of sentiment among a certain class of the people in their willingness to try and help such women. I do not mean to say, the women would have wanted to go.

The possibility of making a satisfactory examination is pretty hard. I have tried at my hospital clinic seeing a good many women with suspicious secretions, to demonstrate the gonococcus and in a very large number of cases where I was perfectly certain that the secretion from the urethra was gonorrheal and a perfectly straight case I have been unable to prove it with the ordinary bacteriological examination. Further I know that some writers in Germany have entirely given up searching in the vaginal and cervical secretions of women for the gonococcus on account of the great difficulty of demonstrating it.

It seems to me under the circumstances that we must do what we can to repress the evil to as small a compass as possible and we can do that best by keeping the women separate rather than allowing them to be housed together. If the people at large know that certain houses are tolerated, are not liable to be raided, and that they can go there in peace and quiet, they will go there often when they have no strong desire of seeking relief, simply for the sake of the good time, having "a circus." A large number of those I see say they got their disease at a time when they had not really any desire, but were perhaps going away on a trip and thought they would go to see a woman just before they went away in case they might feel desire later on. The amount a man does is largely due to the opportunities offered and if the evil is kept in the smallest possible compass then we shall have the least likelihood of extensive spread of the disease.

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